

The Athenian Mercury:

Tuesday, October 18. 1692. Licens'd, E. B.



Quest. 1. **H**ow came Thoughts first into the Minds of men?

Ans. The Question appears something puzzling at first; but on a little closer Examination, all this difficulty vanishes — Thoughts indeed did never come into the minds of men from without, but at the very same time we suppose a Mind, we suppose Thought; for whether we make the Essence of Spirit or Mind to consist in Activity, or cogitability, (if we may have leave to coin the Word) 'twill recur to much the same thing; if Mind is a knowing, thinking, or acting Substance, at the same time it thinks or acts, there is Thought, which is nothing else than the action of the Mind, and which it must exert whenever it has actual Existence.

Quest. 2. What is the Similitude of God in Man, or whether it consists in the rational faculty?

Ans. In some of our former Mercuries concerning the Soul of Man, we have declar'd we take this Similitude to consist in knowing, willing, judging, which are all Acts of Reason. Should we be more Metaphysical, we might fall in with several pretty Notions on this Head. Every derivative Being has some marks or Signatures of the first transcendental Original, Man has these more deeply and legibly imprinted than any other visible Creature, and seems to partake more largely of Entity and its Properties, than any thing besides in this material World, which might be made appear in the three Properties of Being, Unity, Truth and Goodness. As to Unity, should we embrace the Platonical Notion, that the Mind is the Man, 'twere easie to prove Man a more simple Being than any other Inhabitants of this World: However thus far 'tis certain, that what is the Noblest part in him, namely his Soul, is simple and uncompounded, at least with any other Composition than that of Essence and Existence; whereas that which is the principle of Action in Beasts, is in our Opinions wholly material, (tho' some of our Society are of other Sentiments,) both Matter and Form are compounded in a Beast, the Matter only in a Man. Then for Truth, objective Truth, or that by which a thing is known to be what it really is, which by the best Metaphysicians is thought a Propriety of Ens or Being, it is very visibly and fairly stamp'd on mens Minds, and is indeed the principle of all Science. Metaphysical Good is either so in it self, or to others; the first is perfect, either simply so, as God only, or in its own rank or order, as Man, of a sound Mind and Body. Good in relation to another, seems to fall in with moral Good, or at least moral Good may be rank'd under that as well as Physical or Natural; but in whatever sense we take it, Man has the Notions of it imprinted in his Mind, he has there inscrib'd the Principles of true and false, and what are perhaps more necessary to his Happiness, those also of Good and Evil, and in all of these he seems made after the Image of God: — To which, what if we should also add, That the outward, Majestick, Divine, God-like Form of Man may not improbably be here also hinted at, not as if God were like Man, with corporeal Hands, Eyes, as a sort of foolish Hereticks formerly thought him, whose monstrous Fancies were reviv'd by Biddle in the last Age, but that Man may be said in some measure, and in comparison of other Creatures to be like God, to have a sort of Rays or Glory round his Face, and as he is Lord of the Creation, and has Dominion over the visible World, therein to express some faint glimmerings of that infinite Majesty and Power whose Deputy he is here below.

Quest. 3. Whether the Image of God is more perfectly express'd in Men or Angels?

Ans. If we take the whole Body in Gross of meer

Mankind, we think this Image must be granted more lively and glorious in Angels than Men, we being made a little lower than the Angels; thus their Unity is more perfect, excluding all Composition of Matter and Form, they must know infinitely more than we, having the advantage of Age, and all our Experiences, besides what they may have themselves. — And indeed the Invention of some very useful Arts has appear'd so strange and unaccountable, that it would tempt a Man to think they were really owing to the impulse or Revelation of some of these friendly Spirits, who may also (as is still more probable) be the Authors of those kind admonitions, which have been often undoubtedly given to the World by Prodigies and Signs in the Heavens of future Contingencies, and approaching Judgments, that Mankind may avoid 'em, and atone God's Anger by Repentance. And those who thus know Truth must love it; those who are so wise, must be proportionably Good themselves, and love Good in others, communicated or Original, having no opposite Principle, and being also, as some not improbably conjectured, now confirm'd in Goodness by our Saviour, who was the Head of Angels as well as Men, tho' he did not indeed take their Nature upon him as he did ours; which leads to a resolution we inserted at the beginning of this Answer, wherein we assert that Gods Image is more lively in Angels than in meer Man; for if we consider the *ἁγιοεικόνος*, God-man, the Man Jesus Christ, we shall find this Image still infinitely more luminous and glorious in him than in the highest Angel in Heaven, being indeed, as the Holy Scriptures most majestically describe him, the brightness of his Fathers Glory, and the express Image of his Person; and as in the other famous place, the first-born of every Creature, Angels, and Principalities and Powers being made subject unto him. This will be easily granted as to Knowledge, Goodness, Power, or any other Divine Attributes, one only excepted, which may admit some dispute, and that is Simplicity, Indivisibility, or Unity: for are not the Angels, may it be said, more simple Beings, more closely, intimately, purely one than our Saviour, who is compounded, nay *discomposed*, (to borrow a word from the Latins) of God and Man, and that man agen of Soul and Body: But to this we think there's a clear and ready Answer. As our Blessed Saviour by the intimate Union between the Humane and Divine Nature, had all Power both in Heaven and Earth, even while he was here in mortal weakness, and might have used it when he pleas'd, and so all Grace, all Wisdom, and other Divine Perfections, having in him all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; if so, then proportionably by the same ineffable Union by which he and the Father are one, he partakes of such a Simplicity, such an Indivisibility, nay even Indistinction too, as to Essence, as no Man, no Angel ever had, admitting no manner of Composition, neither of matter and matter, nor matter and Form, nor Essence and Existence, nor Act and Power, but ever remaining, as he is God, one simple, incomprehensible, indivisible, glorious Being, having also at once exalted our Nature, and dazled our Reason, by taking the Manhood into God; by which Union, not to be found in any Creature, he is more simple, more undivided than any other Being, something after the same manner, (for indeed both are inconceivable) as the Reasonable Soul and Flesh in one Man, and as that Man is more one than other visible Creatures, because of his Soul, which as before, admits of no other Composition but that of Existence and Essence.

Quest. 4. Whether is more proper to say, the Soul contains the Body, or the Body the Soul?

Ans. We think neither of 'em, strictly taken, a proper

per manner of *Expression*, since neither does the *Soul* contain the *Body*, nor the *Body* properly speaking contain the *Soul*, if we take containing for circumscribing, which implies parts both in the thing contain'd and containing, nay, parts without parts, or quantitative parts, which differ in place and sit from each other: But here one of the Terms, namely, the *Soul*, can have no such parts, therefore it neither can properly contain, nor be contain'd, any more than it can be felt, or seen, or smelt, (by Philip Neri's leave) or as a modern Author pleasantly expresses it, any more than you can have a Yard of Thought or a Pound of Reason.

Quest. 5. How comes the *Soul* in its separate state, to know another *Soul* from an Angel, or the *Soul* of St. Peter from the *Soul* of Judas, and whether this distinction can be made any other way than by Vision? and if so, whether Vision must not imply difference of Figure?

Ans. 'Tis but little we know at best of our *Souls*, even in their present state, and much less does it appear what we shall then be: However, we think the likeliest way to find any thing of probability (we hardly dare say certainty in matters of so Nice a Nature) is to shut our Eyes, and prescind or abstract from all sensible Notions of things, by which we shall at least gain thus much, not to wander much in the wrong way, tho' we may hardly be able to hit in the right. We must then consider that our Eyes are a pair of arrant Cheats, and by our having receiv'd most of our Notions from 'em, take the advantage insufferably to impose upon us as to those Objects which are out of their Province, and not to be judg'd of by sense but reason; this the other senses re-monstrate against, and fighting the fight with its own Weapons, make their Party pretty good, and never suffer Men to talk of seeing a sound or smelt; whereas reason being more abstract, deep, and farther off, the sense at first can with more ease impose upon it, till it comes to reflect on that advice it gives it — Thus here, let any Man set himself a thinking about *Souls* in their separate state, or so conceiv'd, at first glance he'll hardly forbear thinking they are like some glorious thing or other that he has seen or heard of, and perhaps 'twill trouble him to think what he shall do for want of Eyes to see such a sight after he has lost his *Body* — but if he'd agen consider, that ev'n in sensible Objects there are several ways of Perception besides sight, that Angels now certainly have Perception and Knowledge of what is done by Corporeal Agents, which yet have no Eyes nor Ears to do it, that we our selves have now a different Perception from those, we have by our outward Sences (and the internal too, if such there be) which we call reason, and that this Reason is the judge of all outward Perceptions; we shall from all this conclude, that either God will make other Senses which we are not now aware of, by which in a separate state we shall discern what is necessary for us, or else that by reason improv'd or exalted, we shall be capable of judging what is spiritual and reasonable, tho' the manner we can't know till we are all Spirit.

Quest. 6. Gentlemen, I would desire you to inform me which way Cain went into the Land of Nod, whether by Sea or Land, and who it was he took to Wife?

Ans. The Circumstances of the History resolves any that will compare them; that Ver. 3. in Process of time, or 130 Years after the Creation, Cain committed this first Breach in Natural Religion, to kill his Brother Abel at that Publick Sacrifice upon their seventh day; and because God manifested his Pleasure or Displeasure by Voice or otherways, &c. to shew his acceptance, therefore it was called the Presence of the Lord, and because these two Brothers were the Heads of the two Lines, the one famous for Good, the other infamous for Bad, therefore all the Numerous Progeny of Adam and Eve, multiplied within that 130 Years, are omitted, and God designing all should come from one Blood, it's not to be believed Eve was to be Barren all that Process of Time, but as the Families increased, they left Adam, Cain and Abel, with others, and Travelled towards the East part of the Garden, and Collon'd a Place which they called Nod, or the Land or Settlement of the Travellers or Wanderers, and held Correspondence with Adam and them Families, and hither Cain fled for Sanctuary after his Fratricide, and by land and crossing small Ri-

vers he arrived there, and married a Nodditish Woman among these his Relations, and there by their assistance he built, and learned them the Art of Fortification.

Quest. 7. It being a Common Opinion that man consists only of two parts, viz. a *Soul* and *Body*, and finding that Dr. Hammond in his Practical Catechism, is of Opinion, that Man consists of three parts, a *Body*, a living *Soul*, and an immortal *Spirit*, which to prove he uses 1 Thes. 5. 23. Now I desire to know your Opinion, whether the *Soul* and *Spirit* are one, or how diversified? and if the *Soul* be the more ignoble, what becomes of it at death?

Ans. We have already in our former Papers asserted a Man to be made of *Body*, *Soul* and *Spirit*, from the aforesaid Text, where St. Paul prays that their whole Man, *Body*, *Soul*, and *Spirit*, may be, &c. As for the difference of the *Soul* and *Body*, (tho' they are generally taken for the same) the *Spirit* is that immortal substance which is commonly taken for the *Soul*; and this agrees with our Saviour's recommendation of his *Spirit* into his Fathers hands, when he dy'd upon the Cross; as also after him St. Stephen, when he was ston'd. By the *Soul* we mean no more than the Animal Life, and hence it is that we say that Beasts and Vegetables have *Souls*, that is, have lives, or live after their proper Nature: As to what becomes of the Humane *Soul* when a Man dyes, we believe the same that some of the Poets did, *Tennes vanescit in Auras*, it vanishes into Air; or perhaps as Solomon speaks of the *Soul* of a Beast, it goes downward, meaning to the Earth; that this middle Principle or *Soul* of Man is common with that of Beasts, may very fairly be gathered from the Experiments that have been made of transfusion of the Blood of Brutes into Men, which have done very well after, when as their own was before that drain'd out, or no longer able to entertain life by reason of indisposition and distempers, and the Scripture expressly calls the Blood of Beasts their life, but their life being transfus'd into Man, and he living by that makes good what we have said above, and perhaps would evince more to the same effect.

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